

Alcohol Awareness Month – April 2019

April is Alcohol Awareness Month, a fantastic time to start the conversation about underage drinking. Parents have a significant influence on choices their children make, including on topics such as substance use. The sooner you talk to your kids about alcohol, the greater chance you have of influencing their decisions. You can practice this important conversation by using the “Talk, They Hear you” mobile app, available for download at the App Store, Google Play, and the Windows Store. Learn more at <http://www.underagedrinking.samhsa.gov>

One of the resources Samhsa provides is 5 goals to utilize when talking to kids about alcohol and other drugs.

1. Show you disapprove of underage drinking and other drug misuse.

Over 80 percent of young people ages 10–18 say their parents are the leading influence on their decision whether to drink. Send a clear and strong message that you disapprove of underage drinking and misuse of other drugs.

2. Show you care about your child’s health, wellness, and success.

Young people are more likely to listen when they know you’re on their side. Reinforce why you don’t want your child to drink or use other drugs—because you want your child to be happy and safe. The conversation will go a lot better if you’re open and you show concern.

3. Show you’re a good source of information about alcohol and other drugs.

You want your child to make informed decisions about alcohol and other drugs with reliable information about their dangers. You don’t want your child to learn about alcohol and other drugs from unreliable sources. Establish yourself as a trustworthy source of information.

4. Show you’re paying attention and you’ll discourage risky behaviors.

Show you’re aware of what your child is up to, as young people are more likely to drink or use other drugs if they think no one will notice. Do this in a subtle way, without prying.

5. Build your child’s skills and strategies for avoiding underage drinking and drug use.

Even if you don’t think your child wants to drink or try other drugs, peer pressure is a powerful thing. Having a plan to avoid alcohol and drug use can help children make better choices. Talk with your child about what they would do if faced with a decision about alcohol and drugs, such as texting a code word to a family member or practicing how they’ll say “no thanks.”

Keep it low-key. Don’t worry, you don’t have to get everything across in one talk. Plan to have many short talks.

For more information on alcohol and drug prevention or support, please contact Chemical Health Specialist, Ashley Rome for more information at arome@isd622.org.